

*Historic Preservation*

# Historical district study group announced

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This week, selectmen appointed a seven-member study committee to research locations in Duxbury for a local historic district.

The committee includes two realtors, two architects, two construction industry professionals and a member of the Duxbury Historical Commission.

Selectmen appointed realtors Georgia Pye and Donna Street, architects Pamela Campbell Smith and Peter Smith, construction professionals James Hartford and Lee Kennedy, Sr. and Robert C. Vose III, chairman of the Duxbury Historical Commission.

Selectmen also appointed architects James Kimball, Renee Mierzejewski and William Thayer as alternate members.

Under state law governing local historic districts and their set-up, the study committee can have three to seven members and must consist of an architect, a realtor, and a member of the local histori-

cal society, as well as regular citizens and those representing town boards.

The first meeting of the study committee will be held Wednesday, May 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the senior center. Selectmen Chairman Betsy Sullivan will lead the meeting.

An historic district is a group of buildings, properties or sites that have been designated as historically or architecturally significant. Duxbury does not have a local historic district.

A local historic district offers the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic structures important to a town's history and can encourage that new designs are compatible with existing buildings in the district, according to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. In a local historic district, any proposed changes to a building's exterior architectural features that are visible from a public way are reviewed by a locally appointed Historic District Commission. Local historic districts can provide protec-

tion from demolitions and inappropriate remodeling.

The local historic study committee was recommended this year by Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Dennis Murphy. Selectmen voted to form a study committee in March.

Historical Commission member Lynne Devnew told selectmen Monday that her committee would not have begun the process in this way.

"We wouldn't have started with a study committee," said Devnew. "Our recommendation would have been to start with a study of the town. We would have looked at the whole town and looked at what other towns have done."

Devnew said there are two approaches to preserving historical structures: a local historic district and a neighborhood conservation district. Some towns have both, such as Hingham and Cambridge, she said. Devnew added that the Historical Commission had been discussing creating an overall study of the town with the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society just as the historic district study committee idea became known

## IN OTHER BUSINESS, SELECTMEN:

- Approved an event permit for a fundraiser for the Student Union in the Wright building. On May 30 from 10 – 2 p.m., car dealerships will pay \$100 for the privilege of having their hybrid and/or green SUVs at Duxbury beach at low tide and people can pay \$5 to test drive one and see how it performs in the sand. Organizer Evan Sobran said he hopes to raise \$3,000 to \$5,000. He said there will probably be up to 15 vehicles to try. Selectmen approved the permit with conditions from Harbormaster Don Beers.
- Announced the Division of Marine Fisheries has closed the Bluefish River to shellfishing north from Long Point to Maxfield Point and south from Thompson's pier to Long Point.
- Appointed Jill Cadigan-Christenson, of Pine Street, to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill an unexpired term until 2011. Cadigan-Christenson currently serves on the Duxbury Youth Commission. She also served as Selectman Christopher Donato's campaign manager.
- Signed a permanent conservation restriction on the 41 acres of open field on Winter Street bought at Town Meeting 2008 with Community Preservation Act funds from the Berrybrook preschool. The Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts will hold the restriction.
- Wrote a letter in support of the Tarklin Community Center's bid to be included in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Reminded the public to heed the requirements for dogs on Duxbury beach including having them leashed at all times. Dogs are not allowed on the front beach, known as the resident beach south to the poles delineating the 4x4 area from May 1 to Sept. 15. They are also not allowed on the back beach north of the Powder Point bridge adjacent to the resident parking lot from May 1 to Sept. 15.



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Devnew was not in favor of having the study committee only recommend a local historic district on High Street. Murphy had stated earlier that he supported having his neighborhood become the town's first local historic district. However, an effort by the Duxbury Historical Commission to establish a local historic district on High Street in 1991 failed to receive a two-thirds majority at Town Meeting.

Selectmen said they ex-

pected the study committee to look at the entire town and not just concentrate on a High Street district. Selectmen Chairman Betsy Sullivan said her board did express concern at the first meeting with Murphy that the Commission had not been contacted and apologized "if we stepped on toes and skipped over" the commission.

Once the study committee decides on a location for the historic district, it must create a report on the historical and architectural significance of the buildings, structures or sites to be included in the proposed district. The committee should also contact property owners in the areas being considered. Homeowner consent is not required for an historic district, but it is helpful, according to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The local historic district study committee must also conduct property owner opinion surveys, prepare educational material, and hold informational meetings. It must also prepare the preliminary study report that includes its methodology, the significance of the proposed district, how it determined the boundaries of the district, a map of the district, a property street address index, and the bylaw outlining guidelines for the district. The final step is Town Meeting approval.

Devnew urged selectmen to make sure the public was well educated about the local historic district and its restrictions. In a local historic district, there is no review of interior features and a variety of exterior features are often exempt, such as air conditioners, storm doors and windows, paint color and temporary structures. The decision

on which features are exempt from review depends on how the local bylaw is written.

"We have a huge educational need before it can become a rational town discussion," said Devnew.